

September 10, 2002

## Help Teens: Fund Abstinence Education

Dear Colleague:

Last week, Advocates for Youth, SIECUS, and Planned Parenthood launched another campaign to eliminate abstinence-until marriage education programs ([www.nonewmoney.org](http://www.nonewmoney.org)). They claim that abstinence education is “harmful” to the health of adolescents while turning a blind eye to the medical facts regarding the gaps in protection from pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other STDs that condoms provide. In an unabashed demonstration of hubris, Advocates for Youth, SIECUS, and Planned Parenthood promote their own interests over the health and well being of teens.

Here are the facts that distinguish abstinence education from condom promotion:

	Abstinence Education	Condom Promotion
Objective	Eliminate risky teenage behaviors that can lead to pregnancy and STDs.	Reduce pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
Method	Encourage the avoidance of sexual activity. Equip adolescents with reasons and strategies to wait to have sex.	Normalize adolescent sexual activity. Promote condoms and contraceptives. Provide condoms, contraceptives, and abortion referrals to adolescents.
Years of Federal Funding	5 years	~30 years
Federal Funding '02	\$102 million	\$1.1 billion

It seems clear that Advocates for Youth, SIECUS, and Planned Parenthood are more interested in advancing their agenda by silencing any alternatives and in protecting their wallets at the expense of the health and well being of youth.

Federal abstinence programs are unwelcome competition to an industry that has been taking federal funds for over three decades and view teens as its captive audience. Members of Congress should beware of this campaign designed to eliminate a competitive approach that has a proven track record of success by serving children and protecting their health.

Sincerely,

Dave Weldon, M.D.  
Member of Congress